7: Nash E-5 (1957-1967) 1970

NV9 Tzeltal NV9
Amatenango del Valle

must announce his arrival at the gate so that the mother can cover the child from view. In this period, the mother sleeps with the child apart from her husband.

Infants remain swaddled in wrapped skirt pieces—the woman's sash is not used after the first fifteen days—throughout the first year of life. Their arms are bound to their sides by kerchiefs crossed over the chest and drawn around the back with the ends tucked in; this makes it easier to carry the child on the back, wrapped in a large carrying cloth. Mothers sometimes lay sleeping infants on their bed when they are working in the house, but much of the time they carry them on their backs.

The child is given corn gruel to supplement nursing during his third or fourth month. Weaning may be consciously done after the child reaches the age of one and a half or two years. If the child persists in trying to nurse, the mother may put chile sauce or draw a face on her breasts to discourage him.

Much of the care of children from two to four years of age is done by elder siblings. Both girls and boys of from seven to ten years of age carry younger siblings in a carrying cloth on their backs, even when playing very active games. They pacify the child by holding a flower or twig for him to chew or grasp, and they usually share with him any cookies or scraps of food they are given.

School is commonly considered the most joyful time of a person's life. There the children, especially boys, make friendships which last throughout life. School recess is a time for unrestrained running, shouting, and laughter such as I have rarely seen in the houseyards when children play together.

In teaching their children how to work, parents are expected to inculcate not only competence but also a sense of the value of work, for industry is one of the most esteemed traits in both boys and girls. Small girls do errands for their mothers from the age of about four years. When a woman is occupied with pottery, she rarely disturbs herself to get needed items, but calls upon her children to fetch a pot which is out of reach or to bring water for the painting. She gives these orders in a quiet undertone, and I have never seen any need to prompt or cajole the child into fulfilling the errand. By the age of ten or eleven, girls begin to make small pots like